

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCOPING MEETINGS**

Issued: August 4, 2023

**In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit
for the HVDC Modernization Project in Hermantown, Saint Louis County**

Docket Numbers: E-015/CN-22-607 and E-015/TL-22-611

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) and the Department of Commerce (Department) will hold public information and environmental analysis (EA) scoping meetings on Minnesota Power's application for a certificate of need and a high-voltage transmission line (HVTL) route permit for the High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission line project near the City of Hermantown.

The purpose of the meeting is to: (1) provide information to the public about the proposed project, and the state's HVTL route permitting process; and (2) provide members of the public an opportunity to participate in developing the scope of the environmental assessment. This includes commenting on issues or concerns related to the proposed project and proposing alternatives for consideration. This information will be available on eDockets and on the project webpage (<https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/web/project/15051>).

There will be two public meetings in this matter: an in-person meeting and an online (WebEx) meeting. The information presented will be the same at both meetings.

In-Person Meeting

Date: August 29, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: [Solway Town Hall](#)
4029 Munger Shaw Road
Cloquet, MN 55720

Online Meeting (Webex)

Date: August 30, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Meeting No: 2486 372 4368
Call-In No: 1-855-282-6330
Access Code: 2486 372 4368
Password: knQp8D4K7NU

Online Meeting Address:

<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/j.php?MTID=maf5e9354e2c70ad0907ee24cf49e3d09>

If you are joining the meeting online using WebEx and would like to ask a question or make a comment during the designated portion of the meeting, raise your hand using the button at the bottom of the screen or press *3 if you are joining by phone. When it is your turn to speak your line will be unmuted and you will be able to ask questions and provide comments. The chat function is also available if you are having technical issues and our meeting moderator is available to support. Additional instructions for participating are available at:

<https://mn.gov/puc/activities/meetings/webex/>.

To find out if a meeting is canceled due to bad weather or other call 1-855-731-6208 or 651-201-2213 or visit mn.gov/puc.

Written Comment Period

Written comments will be accepted through **September 13, 2023 at 4:30 pm**. Please include the docket number (22-607 for the certificate of need, 22-611 for the HVTL) in all communications. Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

Please focus your comments on information that will help answer the following questions:

- What potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project should be considered in the environmental assessment?
- What are the possible methods to minimize, mitigate, or avoid potential impacts of the proposed project?
- Are there any alternative routes or route segments that should be considered to address potential impacts associated with the 345 kV AC, 230 kV AC, and 250 kV DC transmission lines?
- Are there any unique characteristics of the proposed route or the project that should be considered?
- Are there other ways to meet the stated need for the project, for example, a different size project or a different type of facility? If so, what alternatives to the project should be studied in the EA?
- Are there any items missing or mischaracterized in the certificate of need or route permit applications or issues that need further development?

If proposing an alternative route or route segment, consider what impact the alternative addresses; and how the alternative mitigates the impacts when compared to the applicant's proposed route.

Important. Comments will be made available to the public via the Commission's website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission and the Department do not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

Comments may be submitted:

Online <https://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#comment>
Email jenna.ness@state.mn.us
U.S. Mail Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis Unit
Attn: Jenna Ness
85 7th Place East, Suite 280
St. Paul, MN 55101

Project Description

Minnesota Power proposes to modernize and upgrade the Minnesota terminal of its Square Butte line and interconnect to the existing AC transmission system near its Arrowhead Substation in Hermantown, Minnesota. The project includes the construction of approximately 40 acres of new terminal facilities and high voltage transmission lines (HVTL) to connect those facilities to each other and the existing electrical grid. The new HVDC terminal is proposed to connect to the existing alternating current system by constructing a new St. Louis County 345 kilovolt (kV)/230 kV substation near the current Arrowhead Substation. The new HVDC terminal would be connected to the St. Louis County Substation by less than one mile of 345 kV HVTL. The new St. Louis County substation would be connected to the existing Arrowhead Substation by two parallel 230 kV HVTLs less than one mile in length. Additionally, a short portion of the existing ± 250 kV HVDC line will need to be reconfigured to terminate at the new HVDC terminal.

In addition to the replacement of the existing HVDC terminal, the new HVDC technology would be designed to provide key reliability attributes including voltage regulation, frequency response, black-start capability, and bidirectional power transfer capability.

MP stated the project would reduce system outages, increase the capacity of the system from 550 MW to 900 MW, increase reliability and resilience of the grid, and provide future transfer capacity options. The Project is currently scheduled to be placed in service between 2028 and 2030.

Process Information

The Commission must approve a certificate of need and a route permit before the proposed HVDC Modernization project can be built. The permitting process provides for extensive citizen participation and includes several opportunities for public input such as public meetings, public comment periods, and public hearings. The information gathered throughout the permitting process informs the Commission's final decision on a permit. The permitting process begins with the Commission's acceptance of the CN and route permit application. The Commission accepted MP's application as substantially complete on July 27, 2023. The review time of projects generally varies between 6 to 12 months depending on the size, type, complexity, and controversy of the project.

Certificate of Need

The certificate of need will be processed using informal review under Minn. Rule 7829.1200. The project must meet the statutory requirements under Minn. Stat §216B.243 and Minn. Rule Chapter 7849.

Route Permit Application Review Process

Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minn. Stat. ch. 216E), a route permit from the Commission is required to construct a high-voltage transmission line. This application is submitted under the alternative permitting process set forth in Minn. Stat. § 216E.04 and Minn. R. 7850.2800 to 7850.3900. The Project qualifies for review under the alternative permitting process authorized by Minn. Stat. § 216E.04, subd. 2(4) and Minn. R. 7850.2800, subp. 1(D) because the Project is a high voltage transmission line greater than 200 kV and fewer than five miles in length. The statutes (Minn. Stat. Chapter 216E) and rules (Minn. R. 7850.2800 to 7850.3900) detailing the alternative permitting process may be viewed at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov>.

Environmental Review. The Minnesota Department of Commerce is tasked with preparing an environmental assessment for the Commission on HVTL projects filed under the alternative permitting process. The environmental assessment will contain information on the human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and of any alternative routes identified. The environmental assessment will identify mitigating measures for all routes considered.

Public Hearing. When the environmental assessment is complete, a public hearing for both the certificate of need and route permit will be held in the project area. The hearing will be presided over by an administrative law judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings. At the hearing, members of the public will have an opportunity to make an oral presentation, present evidence, and ask questions of the applicant and staff.

Upon completion of the public hearing process, the Commission will make a final decision on whether to issue a certificate of need and route permit. If a route permit is issued by the Commission, Minnesota Power may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 216E.12.

Additional Information

Filing Requirements. Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are required to file documents using the Commission's electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants, and interested persons are encouraged to use eFiling: mn.gov/puc/edockets, select *How to read notices and use eDockets* and follow the prompts.

Full Case Record. See all documents filed in this matter via the Commission's website at

mn.gov/puc/edockets, select *Go to eDockets*, enter the year (22) and the docket number (607 for the certificate of need, and 22-611 for the route permit), and select *Search*.

Subscribe to the Docket. To receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter visit: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/>, select *Subscribe to Dockets* and follow the prompts.

Project Mailing List. Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate or change your mailing preference. Email docketing.puc@state.mn.us or call Leesa Norton at 651-201-2246 with the docket number (22-611), your name, mailing address, and email address.

Department of Commerce Website: <https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/web/project/15051>.

Community Application Locations. Physical copies of the route permit application are available for review at the following locations:

- **Duluth Public Library – Main Library**
520 W. Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
- **Cloquet Public Library**
320 14th Street
Cloquet, MN 55720

Project Contacts

Public Utilities Commission Public Advisor

Contact publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us, 651-201-2251

Public Utilities Commission Energy Facilities Planner

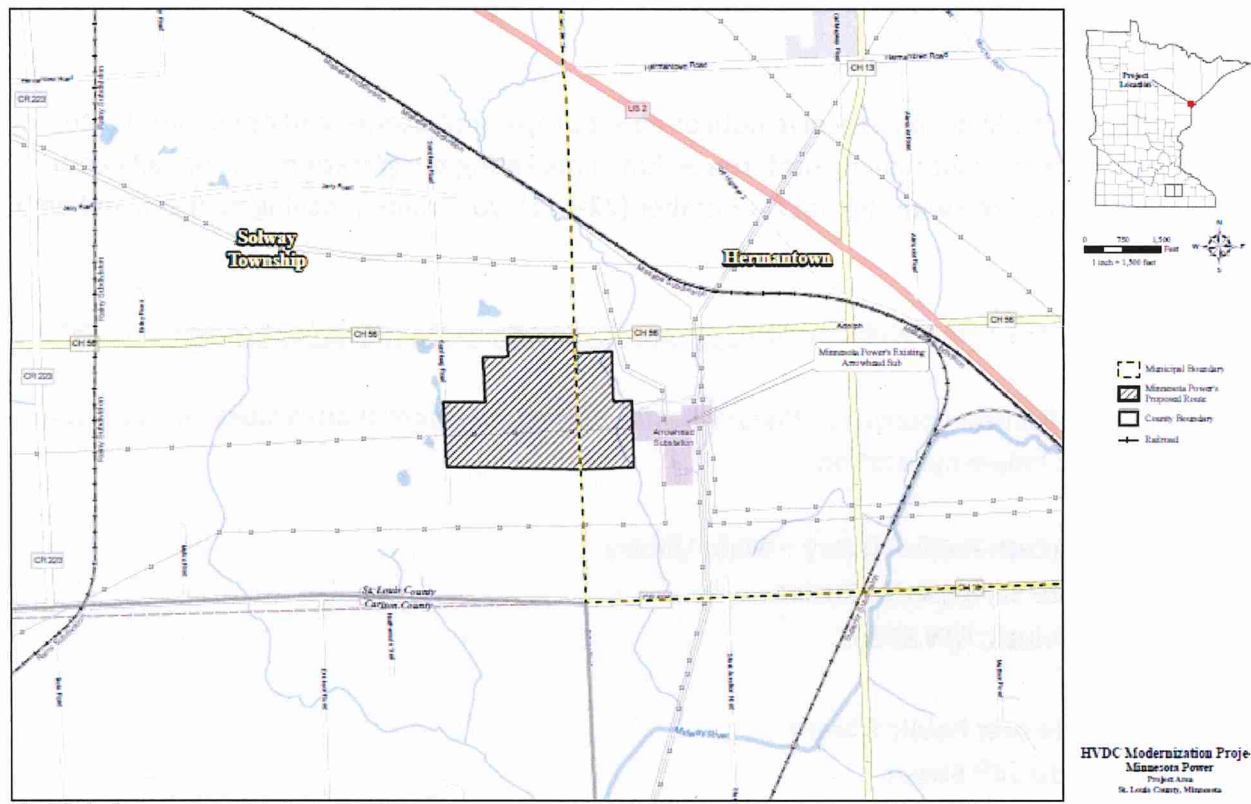
Michael Kaluzniak – mike.kaluzniak@state.mn.us or 651-201-2257

Department of Commerce Environmental Review Manager

Jenna Ness – jenna.ness@state.mn.us, 651-539-1693 or 1-800-657-3794

Minnesota Power Project Contact

Daniel McCourtney – dmccourtney@mnpower.com or 218-355-3515

PROJECT AREA**PROJECT AREA**

If any reasonable accommodation is needed for you to fully participate in these meetings, please contact the Commission at 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782 at least one week in advance of the meeting.

To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651.296.0406 (voice). Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.